

AARES Branch duties and responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities of AARES State Branches in relation to Federal Council and the Annual Conference broadly relate to:

1. Administration of Branch finances and Branch Account signatories;
2. BAS accounting;
3. Providing Branch Activity reports for the Annual General Meeting; and
4. Determining the Undergraduate Prize winner for the Annual Conference.

These duties are separate to the normal professional and social engagement activities within the Branch.

Administration of Branch finances

A few years ago, each Branch had its own bank account and was responsible for keeping its signatories up to date.

Following changes to the legal requirements for Non Profit Organisations such as AARES, we were required to obtain an ARBN with ASIC. We were also required to submit annual consolidated financials to the ATO. At this time, Federal Council decided that it would be more efficient and effective if we set up online CommBiz bank accounts for each of the Australian Branches to assist with the consolidation of the accounts and to satisfy our quarterly BAS requirements.

Online accounts were established with the Commonwealth Bank through CommBiz with four signatories per account - two (or more if desired) from each Branch, plus the Federal Treasurer and the Central Office Manager. This enables bills to be paid on time even if Branch (or Federal) signatories change. It also means that Annie Hurst has most of the required information for the submission of the quarterly consolidated BAS statement and the annual audited accounts without having to chase Branch Treasurers for the necessary information.

In this way Branches can look after their own activities by providing the two required authorisations. Therefore one (or more) users in the Branches can upload any transactions and advise Annie by email so she can provide a second authorisation (if necessary). This is usually done within a few hours of uploading the transaction, or sometimes it may take a little longer. Helen Scarborough and Bob Farquharson are also available should Annie be unable to provide the necessary sign-off.

To maintain Branch authority over transactions it was agreed that on any transaction the Branch, where possible, should provide at least one of the authorisations. The system, as it stands, encourages Branches to look after their own finances (except paying GST), and use the Federal signatories as a back-up.

Changing Branch Account Signatories

Changing Branch signatories is a process that requires original signatures of the New Signatory and the AARES Federal Treasurer on the one form (which is provided by Annie Hurst on request). To verify the New Signatory's signature, that person must sign the form in front of an officer of the Commonwealth Bank and obtain a stamp from that Branch on the form as confirmation. If the individual does not currently hold a bank account with the Commonwealth Bank, they will also need to provide 100 points of identification (such as a passport and a driving licence).

BAS accounting

With the changed financial arrangements for Non-Profit Organisations (above), Annie Hurst now submits a consolidated quarterly BAS statement to the ATO which includes both Federal and Branch information. The AARES Calendar states that Branch Treasurers are to send quarterly financial statements (spreadsheets) to Central Office, but Annie can find most of the relevant information from the Branch bank statements to which she has access and any further questions can be found by a phone call to the relevant Branch Treasurer.

Therefore the only financial requirement is that Branch Treasurers submit an Annual Financial Statement (for the AARES accounting year ending 30 September) to Annie by 30 October. The Branch Treasurer position is important to accurately assign any payments and receipts into the relevant account on the P&L or Balance Sheet.

Providing Branch Activity Reports for the Annual General Meeting

The Branch Secretaries are to provide the Secretary of Federal Council with the Annual Branch Activity Report in December. This report will detail the Branch activities and undergraduate prize winner, and is separate from the Branch Annual Financial Statement submitted by the Branch Treasurers.

Determining the Undergraduate Prize winner for the Annual Conference

Each Branch (apart from North America) is responsible for determining the Undergraduate Prize in its jurisdiction. The purpose of the prize is to recognise merit in undergraduate performance in agricultural and/or resource economics, and introduce students to the Society.

The Branch is responsible for contacting universities and deciding the prize winner.

The prize is made up as follows:

- Federal Office pays 1 year's AARES membership, an economy airfare to the Annual Conference (either the one immediately following the awarding of their prize, or the next one), and a Certificate to be presented at the Annual Conference Awards Dinner, and
- The Branch pays Conference Registration plus a ticket to the Awards Dinner and a ticket to the Early Career Event.

The winner is expected to present their paper at the conference. The winner is required to arrange for and pay for their own accommodation at the conference. If the winner chooses not to attend the AARES Conference, they will be awarded \$200 in lieu.

The Branch Secretary is responsible for informing the Federal Secretary of the prize winner by the end of the calendar year, and providing a completed registration form to the Central Office.

Bob Farquharson

Secretary

AARES Federal Council

October 2015